

Message Text

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ACTION OES-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 CIEP-02
COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 FEAE-00 FPC-01 H-02 INR-07
INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-04 USIA-15 SP-02
SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 ACDA-10 IO-13 PA-02 PRS-01 NRC-07
/132 W

-----241348 027408 /53

R 241300Z FEB 77

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5873

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION IAEA VIENNA

ERDA WASHDC

ERDA GERMANTOWN

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DEPT. PASS NRC

E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: ENRG, TECH, GW

SUBJECT: SELECTION OF SITE FOR GERMAN REPROCESSING
CENTER

REF: A. BONN 19187; B. BONN 19726.

1. SUMMARY. ON FEB. 22 ALBRECHT, MINISTER PRESIDENT
OF LOWER SAXONY (NIEDERSACHSEN), OFFICIALLY
ANNOUNCED THE STATE CABINET DECISION TO LOCATE
GERMANY'S PLANNED INTEGRATED NUCLEAR FUEL CYCLE
CENTER NEAR THE VILLAGE OF GORLEBEN. FIRST PUBLIC
REACTIONS INDICATE THAT THIS CHOICE WILL POSE
MANY PROBLEMS, AS IT IS SITED ONLY 6 KM FROM THE
FRG BORDER WITH THE GDR. END SUMMARY.

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2. ALBRECHT'S ANNOUNCEMENT ENDED A LONG PERIOD OF
SPECULATION AND UNCERTAINTY ABOUT THE POSSIBLE
SITE OF THE FACILITY FOR WHICH FOUR DIFFERENT
LOCATIONS HAVE BEEN FOUND EQUALLY SUITED. ALBRECHT
EXPLAINED THAT THE DECISION WAS ONLY PRELIMINARY
AND WOULD INITIATE A STUDY OF THE SAFETY CONCEPT

FOR THE CENTER WHICH WAS NOT VERY CONVINCING AT THE MOMENT. THE PLANT WILL INCORPORATE A REPROCESSING PLANT AS WELL AS INSTALLATIONS FOR THE FINAL DISPOSAL OF HIGHLY-RADIOACTIVE WASTE. THE PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT WAS ACCOMPANIED BY THE DISTRIBUTION OF SOME HUNDRED THOUSAND PAMPHLETS CONTAINING THE ASSURANCE THAT THE NIEDERSACHSEN GOVERNMENT WOULD OPENLY INFORM THE PUBLIC OF ANY SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT AND THAT THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE PLANT WOULD NOT BE LICENSED UNLESS THE RISKS WERE ACCEPTABLE.

3. IN A FIRST PUBLIC COMMENT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT REITERATED THE CONCERN ABOUT SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS WHICH CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT HAD DISPLAYED IN A DISCUSSION WITH ALBRECHT ON FEB. 11. THE CONTROLLED ZONE FOR THE INTEGRATED FUEL CYCLE CENTER WOULD CALL FOR AN INSPECTION AND MONITORING RADIUS OF 30 KM WHICH WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE IN THE CASE OF GORLEBEN WITHOUT LONG AND TIME CONSUMING CONSULTATIONS WITH THE GDR AUTHORITIES. THE OUTCOME OF SUCH TALKS WOULD BE VERY DUBIOUS BECAUSE THE SALT LAYERS IN WHICH THE RADIOACTIVE WASTE WAS TO BE BURIED EXTENDED INTO GDR TERRITORY WHERE TEST DRILLING FOR NATURAL GAS DEPOSITS WAS CONDUCTED. THE GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN STATED THAT, IF THESE CONCERNS COULD NOT BE RESOLVED, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WOULD BE COMPELLED TO CONSTRUCT THE FACILITY UNDER FEDERAL RESPONSIBILITY AS PROVIDED FOR BY THE ATOMIC ENERGY ACT.

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4. EMBASSY COMMENT.

A. THIS DECISION FOR THE SITE OF THE INTEGRATED NUCLEAR FUEL CYCLE CENTER WILL POSE ANOTHER SERIOUS OBSTACLE TO THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF NUCLEAR ENERGY IN THE FRG. AS NOTED IN REF A AND PRIOR CABLES THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAD DECLARED THAT THE CLOSING OF THE BACK-END OF THE NUCLEAR FUEL CYCLE WAS A PREREQUISITE TO THE LICENSING OF ANY NEW REACTOR. RECENT ASSESSMENTS BY THE NUCLEAR INDUSTRY HAVE SHOWN THAT THIS REQUIREMENT WOULD REDUCE THE ACHIEVABLE GOAL OF NUCLEAR CAPACITY FROM AN -- ALREADY REDUCED -- GOAL OF 35 000 MWE TO A MAXIMUM OF 26 000 MWE BY 1985. IF THE CURRENT TREND OF COURT DECISIONS AGAINST THE CONSTRUCTION OF NEW REACTORS CONTINUES, THE NUCLEAR INDUSTRY ESTIMATES THAT NO NEW CONSTRUCTION WILL START BEFORE 1983 WHICH, ASSUMING A POSITIVE

DECISION OF THE SUPREME COURT OF APPEALS, WOULD
RESULT IN A FREEZE AT THE 18 100 MWE NUCLEAR ELECTRICAL

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ACTION OES-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00
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INR-07 INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-04
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FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5874
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
USMISSION IAEA VIENNA
ERDA WASHDC
ERDA GERMANTOWN

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GENERATING CAPACITY ALREADY INSTALLED OR UNDER
CONSTRUCTION.

B. THE RELUCTANCE OF THE NIEDERSACHSEN GOVERNMENT
TO COMMIT ITSELF STRONGLY TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF
THE INTEGRATED FUEL CYCLE CENTER MUST BE RELATED
TO THE IMPACT THAT RECENT PROTEST DEMONSTRATIONS
AT THE REACTOR SITE BROKDORF HAD ON STATE
POLITICIANS WHO ARE TO IMPLEMENT THE FEDERAL
ENERGY PROGRAM. ALBRECHT'S OFFER TO INFORM THE PUBLIC
IS QUITE OBVIOUSLY AN ATTEMPT TO MITIGATE PUBLIC
OPPOSITION. THE ORGANIZED RESISTANCE MOVEMENT
OPPOSING THE FURTHER EXPANSION OF NUCLEAR ENERGY,
WHICH HAS ALREADY HALTED THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE
TWO PLANNED REACTORS AT WYHL AND BROKDORF, HAD
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DECLARED THAT OPPOSITION TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE INTEGRATED FUEL CYCLE CENTER WOULD BE THE "DECISIVE BATTLE". ALBRECHT HAD ALSO URGED THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO INVESTIGATE AN ALLEGED OFFER BY PRESIDENT CARTER TO REPROCESS GERMAN SPENT FUEL IN THE U.S. THIS SOLUTION WAS FIRMLY REJECTED BY FEDERAL OFFICIALS, WHO POINTED OUT THAT THIS WOULD RESULT IN AN UNDESIRABLE DEPENDANCE ON THE US AND THAT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GERMANY'S FAST BREEDER REACTOR PROGRAM MADE REPROCESSING ESSENTIAL. ALBRECHT'S INSISTENCE THAT THIS SOLUTION BE INVESTIGATED IS FURTHER STRENGTHENED BY THE FACT THAT THE NEW MINOR PARTNER IN HIS COALITION GOVERNMENT, THE FREE DEMOCRATS (FDP), HAD PASSED A PARTY RESOLUTION TO THIS EFFECT (PARA 9. REF B)

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